

MELANIE MCCABE

Your Oak

It sprouted your first spring with stubs of Kentucky Blue,
with breeze-blown seeds of zoysia, and grew faster
than milkweed, but only at night, so that every morning
we woke to a new-made thing, a creation that had never
been in our yard before. Without agreeing on it, I took
no loppers to its bark, your father mowed carefully around
its grey spear and sticky buds, until it overtook the rusting
wire fence, the roof of the car and then the telephone line.
It changed from oak into green shade flickering, and shadowed
you on your swing, in your furrows and mountains of sand.

Now after nineteen years, I look up into its limbs that toss
and alter sky. The tip is a stone that parts a pond of blue;
the waver of wind through the leaves are ripples that widen
out from that stone. The first of the ripples is gone.
From a distance one sees how the tree grew at a tilt, not
heavenward, but leaning into the house, sidling up to
its windows and rubbing its shimmer of jade or brown
over the bricks, the panes, the way a cat butts its head
into a hand that will love it. At night the tree teases the glass;
it shivers and sighs on gusts of all that is left of a hurricane.